

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND AND PROVIDENCE PLANTATIONS  
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION  
DIVISION OF PUBLIC UTILITIES AND CARRIERS  
PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND

IN RE: RULES AND REGULATIONS PRESCRIBING  
STANDARDS FOR GAS LINE ABANDONMENT  
AND LEAKAGE SURVEY PROCEDURES  
DOCKET NO. D-86-2

REPORT AND ORDER

WHEREAS: The Public Utilities Commission, Division of Public Utilities and Carriers shall have power to make such reasonable rules as will aid it in the administration and enforcement of its legal responsibilities. Rhode Island General Law, Title 39, Chapter 3, Section 33, as amended.

ACCORDINGLY, IT IS

(12017) ORDERED: That the Regulations attached hereto are hereby adopted by the Public Utilities Commission, Division of Public Utilities and Carriers.

DATED AND EFFECTIVE AT PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND THIS TWENTY-FIRST DAY OF MAY 1986.

Bruce Stevenson, Deputy Administrator

STATE OF RHODE ISLAND  
DIVISION OF PUBLIC UTILITIES AND CARRIERS

ENGINEERING DIVISION

GAS PIPELINE SAFETY SECTION

RULES AND REGULATIONS PRESCRIBING STANDARDS FOR  
GAS LINE ABANDONMENT AND LEAKAGE SURVEY PROCEDURES

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## I. DEFINITIONS

A. "Abandoned" means that the service line is physically disconnected (cut-off) at the main or at the distribution line that is the source of supply if the pipe is not a main and the pipe is made from material other than plastic or cathodically-protected steel. If the service line is plastic or cathodically-protected steel, it may be cut off at or in close proximity to a property line and made into a stub. When the service line is abandoned, the meter and assembly must be removed. The end of the operator's pipe that is within the customer's building must be cut off below ground and sealed outside the building or must be sealed by inserting a device within the service line to a point that is outside the building wall or foundation. Provisions must be made so that the seal or device cannot be readily removed. When the end of the operator's pipe is located above ground outside the building, the above-ground segment must be removed and the remaining segment below-ground sealed. In any case, the pipeline's above or below-ground entry point into the building or foundation must be sealed after the pipe has been removed. The pipeline shall be purged, inerted and sealed in accordance with the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Title 49, 192.727 (b) or its successor regulation(s).

B. "Distribution line" means a gas pipeline, other than a gas-gathering or transmission line, that is normally used by utilities for the transportation of natural gas and/or other flammable gas to customers.

C. "Discontinued" means that gas service is no longer provided to the customer and the prevention of gas flow is usually performed by a locking device (valve) located in the service line or in the meter assembly.

D. "Division" shall mean the Administrator of the Division of Public Utilities and Carriers or his (her) designee of the Division of Public Utilities and Carriers.

E. "Inactive" means a service line where gas service to the customer has been discontinued but the service line has not been abandoned.

F. "Main" means a distribution line that serves as a common source of supply for more than one service line.

G. "Operator" shall mean a person who engages in the transportation of gas.

H. "Person" shall mean any individual, firm, joint venture, partnership, corporation, association, state, municipality, cooperative association or joint stock association, and including any trustee, receiver, assignee or personal representative thereof.

I. "Pipe" means any pipe or tubing used in the transportation of gas, including pipe-type holders.

J. "Pipeline" shall mean all parts of those physical facilities through which gas moves in transportation, including pipe, valves and other appurtenances attached to pipe, compressor units, metering stations, regulator stations, delivery stations, holders and fabricated assemblies up to the outlet of customers' meters or the connection to a customer's piping, whichever is farther downstream.

K. "Pipeline facility" shall mean new and existing pipeline, rights-of-way and any equipment, facility or building used in the transportation of gas or in the treatment of gas during the course of transportation.

L. "Service line" means a distribution line that transports gas from a common source of supply to a customer.

M. "Service stub" means a partial service line that terminates at or in close proximity to a property line.

## II. JURISDICTION

The Rhode Island Division of Public Utilities and Carriers, pursuant to Chapters 3 and 4 of Title 39 of the General Laws of Rhode Island, as amended, is empowered to prescribe and enforce safety standards for pipeline facilities and to regulate safety practices of persons engaged in the transportation of natural gas and other gas by pipeline.

## III. ADOPTION OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS

Federal regulations issued under the Act of 1968, promulgated by the Office of Pipeline Safety of the United States Department of Transportation and published in Title 49 CFR, Parts 191, 192 and 193, apply to all pipeline operators. The Safety Standards of the Act (the Pipeline Safety Regulations) apply to the design, installation, inspection, testing, construction, extension, operation, replacement and maintenance of pipeline facilities. Standards affecting the design, installation, construction, initial inspection and testing are not applicable to pipeline facilities in existence prior to the act. The Division has adopted the above regulations, as amended.

## IV. IDENTIFICATION AND ABANDONMENT OF KNOWN OR RECORDED SERVICE LINES THAT BECAME INACTIVE BEFORE THE EFFECTIVE DATE OF THESE REGULATIONS

1. The operator shall establish and begin a program to identify the location of inactive service lines and service stubs within one-hundred eighty (180) days of the effective date of these regulations. The identification program shall be completed by the operator within thirty-six (36) months of the effective date of these regulations.

2. All nonplastic and non-cathodically-protected steel inactive service lines/service stubs shall be abandoned and all plastic and cathodically-protected steel inactive service lines shall be physically disconnected (cut off) within close proximity to the property line at a rate equal to the greater of ten (10%) percent or fifty (50) annually beginning from the effective date of these regulations. All inactive service lines and service stubs known and identified shall be abandoned within ten (10) years.

3. The operator must determine the priorities for inactive service line abandonment based on such appropriate variables as service-line age, location, condition, material, construction methods, leak and maintenance history of the pipe, existence and/or application of cathodic protection, time period of inactivity, individual and property-owner requests, and any other criteria selected by the operator.

#### V. ABANDONMENT OF SERVICE LINES THAT BECOME INACTIVE AFTER THE EFFECTIVE DATE OF THESE REGULATIONS

1. All nonplastic and non-cathodically-protected steel inactive service lines and service stubs shall be abandoned within five (5) years, unless such lines have been reactivated.

2. All plastic and cathodically-protected steel inactive service lines shall be physically disconnected (cut off) at least to within close proximity of a property line within five (5) years.

3. The operator should determine whether inactive service lines ought to be abandoned at any prior time. The determination shall be based on such appropriate variables as service line age, location, condition, material, construction methods, leak and maintenance history of the pipe, existence and/or application of cathodic protection, individual and property-owner requests and other criteria selected by the operator.

#### VI. ABANDONMENT OF ANY INACTIVE SERVICE LINE

Notwithstanding the above, inactive service lines which shall be abandoned promptly are those:

1. located in, or in close proximity to, excavations; or
2. located in, or in close proximity to, buildings being demolished; or
3. discovered to be leaking gas; or
4. unrecorded or previously unknown lines discovered in the course of leakage surveys, construction, maintenance or inspection of facilities.

## VII. LEAKAGE SURVEY OF ALL SERVICE LINES

Leakage surveys, using a gas detector method, such as flame-ionization equipment or equivalent devices, must be conducted in business districts, including tests of the atmosphere in gas, electric, telephone, sewer, and water system manholes, at cracks in pavement and sidewalks, and at other locations providing an opportunity for finding gas leaks at intervals not exceeding fifteen months but at least once each calendar year, beginning from the effective date of these regulations.

Leakage surveys of the distribution system outside of the principal business areas must be made as frequently as necessary, but at intervals not exceeding 5 years. The surveys shall begin one year from the effective date of these regulations. These surveys too must utilize a gas detector method as mandated above.

Persons participating in leakage surveys shall be trained to establish or recognize the possible existence of locations of unknown or unidentified leaking inactive service lines that may be found during survey analysis.

## VIII. RECORDS, REPORTS AND PROCEDURES

1. Readily accessible records of inactive service lines and service stubs shall be maintained by the operator which shall include the type of pipe material, the service line's location, the date the service line became inactive, and the date the service line was installed. If any information is unavailable to or unobtainable by the operator, it shall be listed on the record as "unknown".
2. Readily accessible records of the location of any service line that is abandoned after the effective date of these regulations shall be maintained by the operator for a length of time determined by the operator but for no less than five (5) years from the date of abandonment.
3. Each operator shall report to the Division annually the statistical progress of their abandonment program. The report will be due annually from the effective date of these regulations.

## IX. APPLICATION FOR EXCEPTIONS AND WAIVERS FROM PROVISIONS OF THESE REGULATIONS

An operator may make a written request to the Division for an exception to the provision of these regulations. The Division may, after consideration, and the showing of good cause, issue the exception as requested or with modifications thereof to the particular operator requesting such exception.